



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS BALTIMORE DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Intrusive Operations at Spring Valley Halted – USACE Takes Precautions Pending Analysis of Recovered Munition

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has temporarily paused intrusive operations work at Spring Valley's Pit 3. The work pause follows the protocols in our Safety Plan and is a cautionary measure to ensure, based on a munition recently excavated from Pit 3 that the Maximum Credible Event used as the basis of planning accurately reflects potential risk of operations.

To ensure the safety of our workers and the Spring Valley community, USACE will not continue with intrusive operations until a detailed analysis and a final assessment is made, and the MCE has been approved by both the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety and the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board. We have coordinated the pause with our partners – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III and the Washington D.C. Department of the Environment. We also have notified key members of the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board and the property owner, American University.

MORE

“The safety of the Spring Valley community remains our primary concern during this cleanup work. We are confident this pause in intrusive operations is the right public safety measure to take at this time,” said Colonel Peter W. Mueller, commander, USACE Baltimore District.

The pause in intrusive operations at Pit 3 does not impact ongoing arsenic removal work or work at the test pits at the neighboring property.

An MCE is the event used to determine the appropriate engineering and safety controls that need to be in place before beginning an investigation or intrusive operation. This is based on research – the munitions or material known to be used and the operations known to have occurred at the site based on historical documentation and anecdotal evidence, and items recovered from nearby sites in the past. In the case of the Pit 3 munitions recovery operation, the MCE planned for was the instantaneous release of Arsine from a non-explosively configured 75mm MK II chemical projectile.

Spring Valley was the site of U.S. Army chemical weapons development and testing during World War I at the former American University Experimental Station. Pit 3 is the last known burial area located in the 661-acre Formerly Used Defense Site and is part of the ongoing investigation and cleanup of the site. Intrusive operations began at the site Oct. 29.

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